

**R.I. Department of Environmental Management  
Division of Freshwater Wetlands**

**Guidelines for Qualified Professionals Re:  
Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat**

The following guidelines are provided to assist applicants and others in determining the minimum qualifications for professionals who evaluate wildlife and wildlife habitat associated with freshwater wetlands. Wildlife and wildlife habitat are two components of freshwater wetlands which must be evaluated when submitting an Application to Alter a Freshwater Wetland to the R.I.D.E.M.'s Division of Freshwater Wetland. **These guidelines are not intended to certify the credentials of a wildlife professional or to guarantee that the Department will concur with the findings of the professional.** They are only intended to indicate that the wildlife professional is likely to possess the education and experience conducive to providing an acceptable evaluation.

Qualified wildlife professionals should have the following minimum education and experience:

1. **Education:** A Bachelor's degree, or higher degree from an accredited college or university with successful completion of a course of study which includes at least the following:
  - (a) **Biological Science:** At least thirty-three (33) semester hours in biological sciences. Of the thirty-three (33) semester hours, a minimum of twelve (12) semester hours should be in wildlife related courses such as wildlife management or wildlife biology, three (3) semester hours in ecology, nine (9) semester hours in zoology, and nine (9) semester hours in botany.
  - (b) **Physical Science:** At least nine (9) semester hours in courses such as soil science, chemistry, physics, geology and similar courses, with at least two (2) disciplines represented.
  - (c) **Quantitative Science:** At least six (6) semester hours in courses such as basic statistics, experimental statistics, population dynamics, advanced algebra, computer science, mathematical modeling, and other similar courses.
  - (d) **Supplemental courses of study:** In those cases where coursework for the wildlife professional is lacking in the areas noted in a, b, or c above, specialized supplemental courses may be substituted. In addition, demonstration of substantial knowledge and experience in certain aspects of wildlife and wildlife habitat may suffice where specific courses of study are lacking.
2. **Experience:** A minimum of two (2) years of full-time professional experience performing wildlife and wildlife habitat analyses is recommended. Professional experience concentrating in the identification, description and assessment of anticipated impacts related to proposed projects on wildlife functions and values associated with freshwater wetlands is highly desirable. Note: A Master's degree in a wildlife related field of study shall equal one (1) year of experience. A Ph.D in a wildlife related field of study shall equal two (2) years of experience.

3. Those persons that have been certified as a Certified Wildlife Biologist by The Wildlife Society, Inc., a non-profit scientific and educational organization at 5410 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814-2197, telephone: 301-897-9770, should be considered to meet the minimum qualifications noted above.

The wildlife professional should be experience in the practices and procedures of R.I.D.E.M.'s Division of Freshwater Wetlands and should be intimately familiar with the definitions of freshwater wetlands contained within the Rhode Island Freshwater Wetlands Act and all current Rules and Regulations regarding freshwater wetlands.

A representative list of projects involving the Wildlife professional should be provided to the applicant upon request.

Note: The Division of Freshwater Wetlands is interested in any comments or concerns regarding these guidelines. Please address your comments to: R.I. Department of Environmental Management, Division of Freshwater Wetlands, 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908.